Bronte Creek Provincial Park

Draft Revised Management Plan

Ontario

Ministry of Natural Resources

Vincent G. Kerrio
Minister

ISBN 0-7729-4824-0

© 1988, Queens Printer for Ontario
Printed in Ontario, Canada

Single copies of this publication are available at no charge from the addresses noted below. Bulk orders may involve charges.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Cambridge District Office
P.O. Box 2186, Beaverdale Road
Cambridge, Ontario
N3C 2W1
Telephone: (519) 658-9355

or

Bronte Creek Provincial Park
1219 Burloak Drive
Burlington, Ontario
L7R 3X5
Telephone: (416) 827-6911 or (416) 335-0023

P.O. Box 2186
605 Beaverdale Road
Cambridge, Ontario
N3C 2W1

November 4, 1988

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am pleased to introduce the Draft Revised Management Plan for Bronte Creek Provincial Park.

This document results from a review of the 1972 Park Master Plan. The revised plan establishes long term policy and sets direction for management and development of the park. The lifespan of the proposed plan is 10 years.

The review was initiated to incorporate information acquired from park operating experience and knowledge, to consider changing development patterns in the area, to reflect a more realistic appraisal of future funding, to ensure the adequate protection of identified resources and to give consideration to changing demands for public recreation.

I invite you to review the contents of this document and return the enclosed questionnaire indicating your comments and concerns. You may also wish to attend one of the open houses to be held at the Oakville Central Library, 120 Navy Street, Oakville or the Venture Inn, 2020 Lakeshore Road, Burlington. The open houses will take place on the evenings of November 24th and 29th, respectively.

For more information please contact the project planner at Bronte Creek Provincial Park (416) 827-6911 or (416) 335-0023.

Yours truly,

J. J. McFadden
District Manager
Cambridge District

DFC/gmb

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
2.0	SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ISSUES	1
2.1	Park Roles and Themes	1
2.2	Level of Development	3
2.3	Camping	3
2.4	Internal Park Transportation	5
2.5	Adjacent Land Development	5
2.6	Public and Private Requests for Land	5
3.0	PARK CLASSIFICATION	6
4.0	PARK GOAL	6
5.0	PARK OBJECTIVES	6
5.1	Recreation	6
5.2	Protection	6
5.3	Heritage Appreciation	7
5.4	Tourism	7
6.0	PARK BOUNDARY	7
7.0	ZONING	8
7.1	Nature Reserve Zone	8
7.2	Development Zone	10
7.3	Natural Environment Zone	10
7.4	Historical Zone	11
8.0	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES	12
8.1	Landform	12
8.2	Vegetation	12
8.3	Fisheries	14
8.4	Wildlife	14
8.5	Cultural Resources	14
9.0	OPERATIONS POLICIES	15
9.1	Visitor Services	15
9.2	Research	17
9.3	Recreation Management	17
9.4	Marketing	17
9.5	Tourism Services	18

10.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES..... 18
10.1 Day-use..... 18
10.2 Existing Facilities..... 18
10.3 Visitor Services..... 18
10.4 Trails..... 18
10.5 Buffer Areas..... 20
10.6 Servicing..... 20
10.7 Internal Roads..... 21
10.8 Municipal Consultation..... 21

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES..... 21

12.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION..... 21

13.0 REFERENCES..... 23

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

1. Regional Context..... 2
2. Existing Development..... 4
3. Zoning..... 9
4. Proposed Development..... 19

LIST OF APPENDICES

Page

APPENDIX A: Potential Themes For Cultural Programming..... 26

APPENDIX B: Research Proposals..... 27

APPENDIX C: Summary Of Public Consultation..... 28

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The creation of Bronte Creek Provincial Park was announced in 1972 after which several years of major development followed. The 684 hectare site was put into regulation in July of 1975 (O.Reg. 661/75).

This popular recreation class park is located within the Regional Municipality of Halton. The property is sited immediately north of the Queen Elizabeth Highway on the Burlington-Oakville boundary.

The park attracts more than 300,000 visitors annually, and because of its near-urban setting, is accessible to 4.8 million potential day-use visitors.

Bronte Creek offers family and group picnic facilities, a children's farm, a working turn-of-the-century farm, nature programs and exhibits, a variety of court games and popular seasonal activities such as sunbathing, swimming, tobogganning and skating. Recreation equipment rentals and fast food services are provided by a concessionnaire.

Trails development includes a fitness trail and opportunities for cycling, hiking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.

The Bronte Creek valley is a very distinctive feature of the park. The valley corridor and associated rim forests are designated as a provincially significant life science resource. This vegetation-landform complex is the least disturbed and most continuous river valley system to occur on the southward sloping shale plains north of Lake Ontario.

A regionally significant cross-section of a buried river valley and a number of locally significant earth science features are also represented.

Additional park resources include provincially significant archaeological and historical features that range in chronology from Archaic to Post-European contact.

Inventory reports and checksheets describing these features are available at the park office.

2.0 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

As part of the ministry's committment to public consultation, a Background Information/Issues And Options report was circulated for public review. Significant issues identified in the report and preferred options for dealing with them are discussed below. The issues originate in past operating experience and undeveloped proposals from the 1972 Plan.

2.1 Park Roles and Themes

The following roles and themes were selected to provide direction for park management. Choices were made on the basis of public consultation, the significance of park resources and existing program support.

Figure 1:

Regional Context

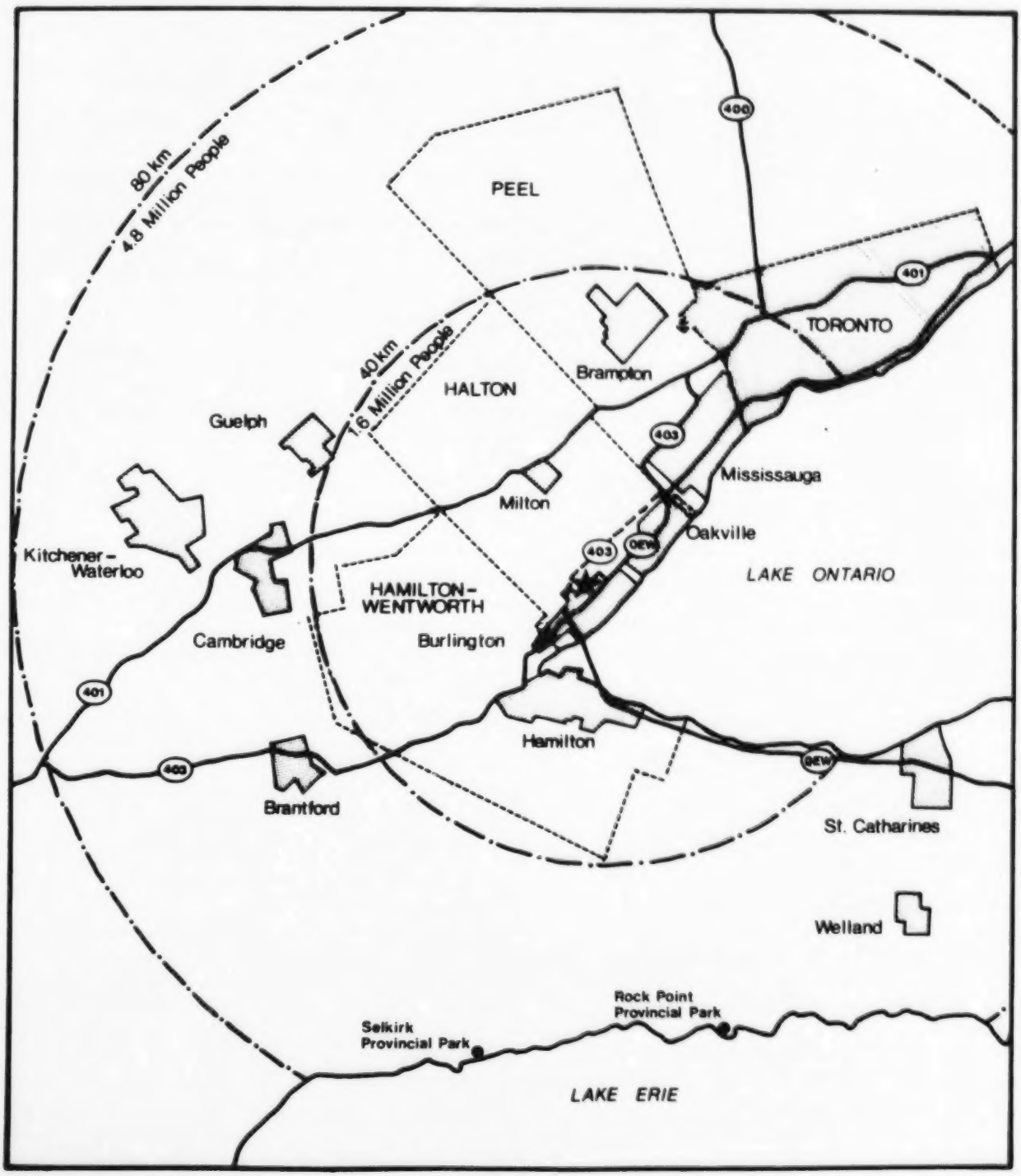
Legend:

------ Regional Municipality Boundary

——— Highway

— — Proposed Highway

★ Bronte Creek Provincial Park



Primary Roles:

Natural Areas Protection

The public indicated a strong interest in natural areas protection. This key role is to be realized through management initiatives, zoning and interpretive programming.

Recreation

The other major role for the park is the provision of various types of day-use recreation.

Secondary Roles:

Education

Providing learning experiences for all visitors, including schools and day camps, is an important but secondary role. Priority will be given to addressing natural and cultural resources.

Resources Management:

The resources management role is a low priority initiative directed towards resource protection. The role will be facilitated through demonstration projects and interpretation.

Primary Theme:

Natural and Cultural Heritage Appreciation

The major focus for park management and development is natural and cultural heritage appreciation. This is to be achieved through new facility development and interpretation.

Secondary Theme:

Rural Living

This minor theme represents one component of the park's cultural heritage. Rural Living programs are largely centred around farm activities and special event demonstrations.

2.2 Level of Development

The 1972 Management Plan recommended intensive development in all areas of the park. That plan was not fully implemented because of limited funding.

During the Issues And Options Phase of the Management Plan Review, three levels of development were proposed for consideration. These were:

- maintain existing development;
- maintain existing development but with enhanced programming; or
- provide new development related to park roles and themes.

A blend of new programming and new facility development is recommended. The result is a revised plan much less ambitious than that proposed in 1972.

2.3 Camping

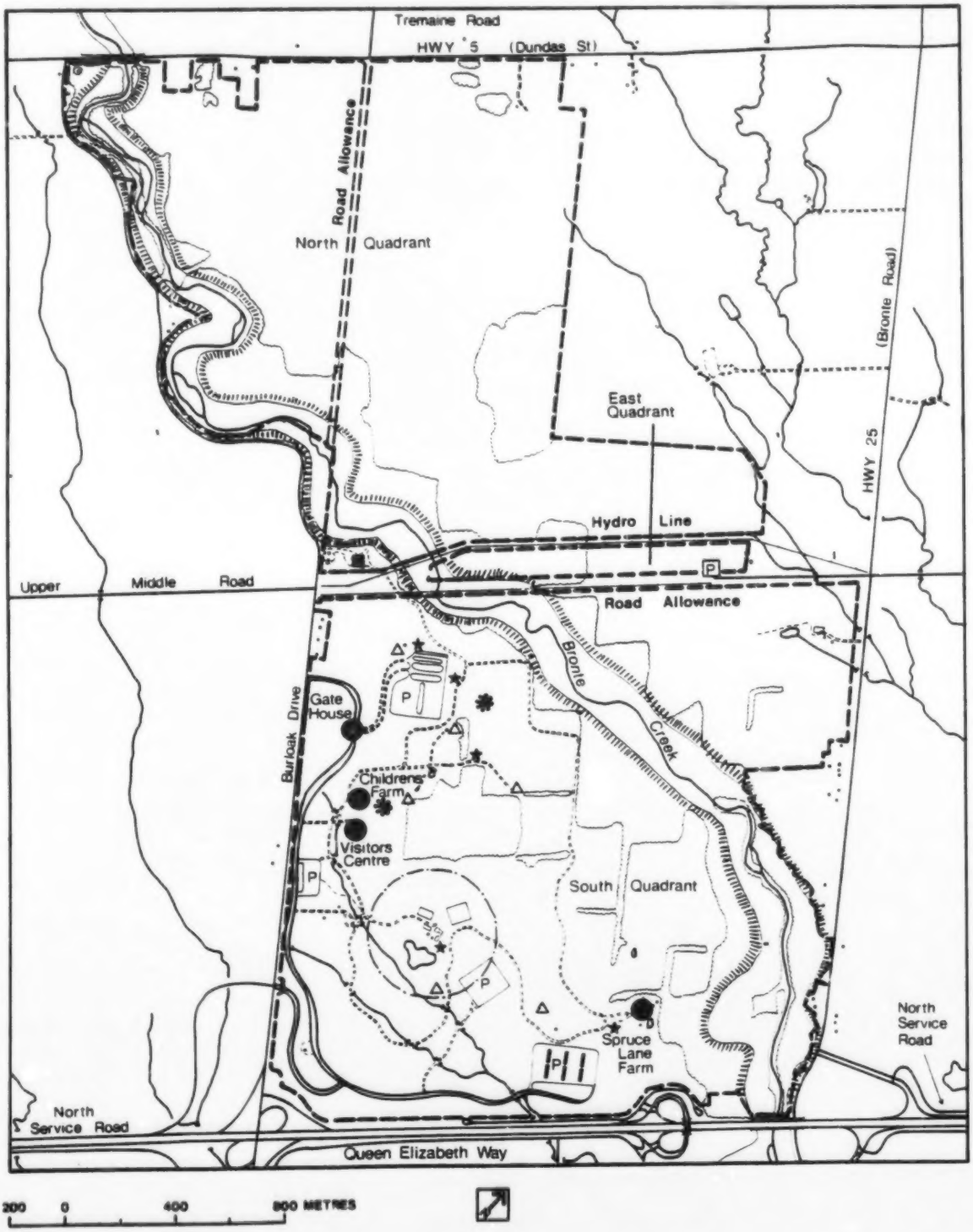
The decision has been made to defer camping to the next park management plan review. In the interim the ministry will ensure that no development is

Figure 2:

Existing Park Development

Legend:

- Parking
- Maintenance Area
- Recreation Complex
- Park Boundary
- Washroom
- Play Area
- Major Facility
- Picnic Shelter



allowed to occur that would preclude the establishment of a campground.

The decision reflects the mixed acceptance of camping by the public, the high priority for upgrading aging facilities across the provincial parks system and the significant costs associated with campground development and operation.

2.4 Internal Park Transportation

Early in the park's development, tractor drawn wagons were used to transport visitors to facilities. This service was later cut because of limited funding and unsuccessful concessionnaire agreements.

The public continue to show good support for this type of service, however, the cost is very high. Rather than propose an expensive transportation system, the decision has been made to undertake other smaller projects that provide a greater public service.

2.5 Adjacent Land Development

Potential development adjacent to the park could have a negative affect on park objectives. Areas of concern include the following:

- the land immediately west of Burloak Drive between Upper Middle Road and Highway # 5 (Dundas Street);
- a presently unopened road allowance (Upper Middle Road) which bissects the park in an east-west direction between Concessions I and II, south of Dundas Street.

The Burloak Drive location is a concern because of the potential for long term residential development next to the valley rim. Here aesthetics, slope stability, uncontrolled access, erosion and safety are important issues. Where at all possible, the ministry will seek to resolve these concerns through the Planning Act and municipal land use controls.

Upper Middle Road, if opened through the park, would have a significant impact on the Bronte Creek valley and would detract from the quality of experience enjoyed by park visitors. The preferred strategy for resolving this issue is acquisition.

2.6 Public and Private Requests for Land

The Ministry of Natural Resources has been approached regarding the sale and lease of park lands for private and public development.

Public ventures will be explored only where they are complementary and of long term benefit. Private development will not be considered except for utilities, and then only under special circumstances. Specific policies are outlined in section 6.0.

3.0 PARK CLASSIFICATION

In recognition of its ability to support a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities for large numbers of people, Bronte Creek is classified as a **recreation class park.**

4.0 PARK GOAL

The goal of Bronte Creek Provincial Park is:

To offer a wide variety of high quality recreational and educational experiences and to protect the provincially, regionally and locally significant biological, geological and cultural resources of the park.

5.0 PARK OBJECTIVES

Bronte Creek Provincial Park will contribute to the achievement of the recreation, protection, heritage appreciation and tourism objectives of the provincial parks system. The park will also contribute to the achievement of targets set out in the Cambridge District Land Use Guidelines.

Specific park objectives are as follows.

5.1 Recreation

To provide park visitors with opportunities to enjoy a variety of year round, day-use recreational activities.

The park offers both intensive and passive recreational opportunities to its visitors. Passive activities include family picnicking, sunbathing, cycling, fishing, walking and cross-country skiing. The more intensive activities include group picnicking, court and field games, children's play, tennis, swimming, skating and tobogganning.

As the only provincial park in Cambridge District, Bronte contributes exclusively to the recreation targets set out in the District Land Use Guidelines. The park annually provides 80,500 swimming opportunities and 384,000 picnicking opportunities. Respectively these represent 25 and 100 per cent of the opportunities targeted for the District to the year 2000.

5.2 Protection

To protect the provincially, regionally and locally significant biological, geological and cultural resources of Bronte Creek Provincial Park.

Within the park the Bronte Creek valley is a provincially significant resource designated for its biological diversity and landform representation.

The valley site is one of the most diverse, least disturbed river corridors occurring along the northwestern Lake Ontario shoreline. The valley complex contains regionally and locally significant earth science features.

Cultural resources in the park include at least 9

provincially significant archaeological sites. These provide evidence of human occupation dating from 5000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.

A number of other historical features of significance also occur on site, including 6 farmhouses and several outbuildings from the Victorian period, a sawmill race and a brick kiln.

Of these features only the Fred Breckon homestead is fully restored and actively interpreted. The remaining buildings are vacant or used for program delivery and administration.

5.3 Heritage Appreciation

To provide opportunities for visitors to explore and appreciate the natural and cultural resources existing in Bronte Creek Provincial Park.

Visitors to the park will have opportunity to discover the local environment and to learn of the park's heritage resources. Achievement of this objective will be through self-use interpretation, staff-led programs and special event demonstrations.

5.4 Tourism

To contribute to tourism by providing local, regional and out-of-province visitors with opportunities to recreate and explore the special features of the area.

Bronte Creek Provincial Park provides a natural setting for a variety of recreational and educational pursuits. The park will become increasingly important for those planning day excursions from Halton, Peel and other major growth centres.

6.0 PARK BOUNDARY

No significant expansion of the park is planned, however, the acquisition of 3 private properties (approximately 6 hectares) is recommended to secure protection for the Bronte Creek valley. Acquisition will occur only as the properties become available for purchase and as funding permits.

Acquisition of the unopened Upper Middle road allowance (approximately 3.6 hectares) from the Town of Oakville is strongly recommended. The potential extension of Upper Middle Road through the park would jeopardize valley protection and diminish the overall integrity of the park.

Properties proposed for acquisition are shown on figure 4.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will strive to protect the valley rim along Burloak Drive between Upper Middle Road and Highway # 5. Protection in this area will be achieved by negotiating appropriate land use controls with the local municipality.

Ontario Hydro owns land (approximately 7.6 hectares) that bisects the park in an east-west direction parallel to the unopened Upper Middle

road allowance. Issues respecting future development are not a concern here but land use control is.

At present the park has no authority to regulate public use on Hydro lands. This creates the potential for unrestricted access into the park core and subsequent enforcement problems. To resolve this concern the ministry will seek easements for public use on all appropriate Hydro lands.

TransCanada Pipelines and the Interprovincial Pipeline Company also hold easements within the park. Apart from road and service crossings, which require special approvals, park development will be kept a minimum of 10 meters from all easements.

With the exception of utilities, new private development within the park will not be considered. The ministry will discuss utility proposals only where alternate locations cannot be found.

Proposals for public ventures will be considered only if they can be proven to be complementary to the long term objectives of the park.

7.0 ZONING

Bronte Creek Provincial Park contains the following park zones:

- Nature Reserve
- Development Zone
- Natural Environment Zone
- Historical Zone

Zoning is based upon Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies. All zones are designated to ensure the protection and wise management of park resources. Each zone is shown on figure 3.

7.1 Nature Reserve Zone

Description:

This 174 hectare zone contains the Bronte Creek valley within the park. The site is designated as a provincially significant life science feature.

The significance of the valley is also recognized by the Regional Municipality of Halton. Halton has designated a large portion of the valley as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). In the park the ESA is generally consistent with the Nature Reserve Zone, however, the ESA extends substantially north and south of the park boundaries.

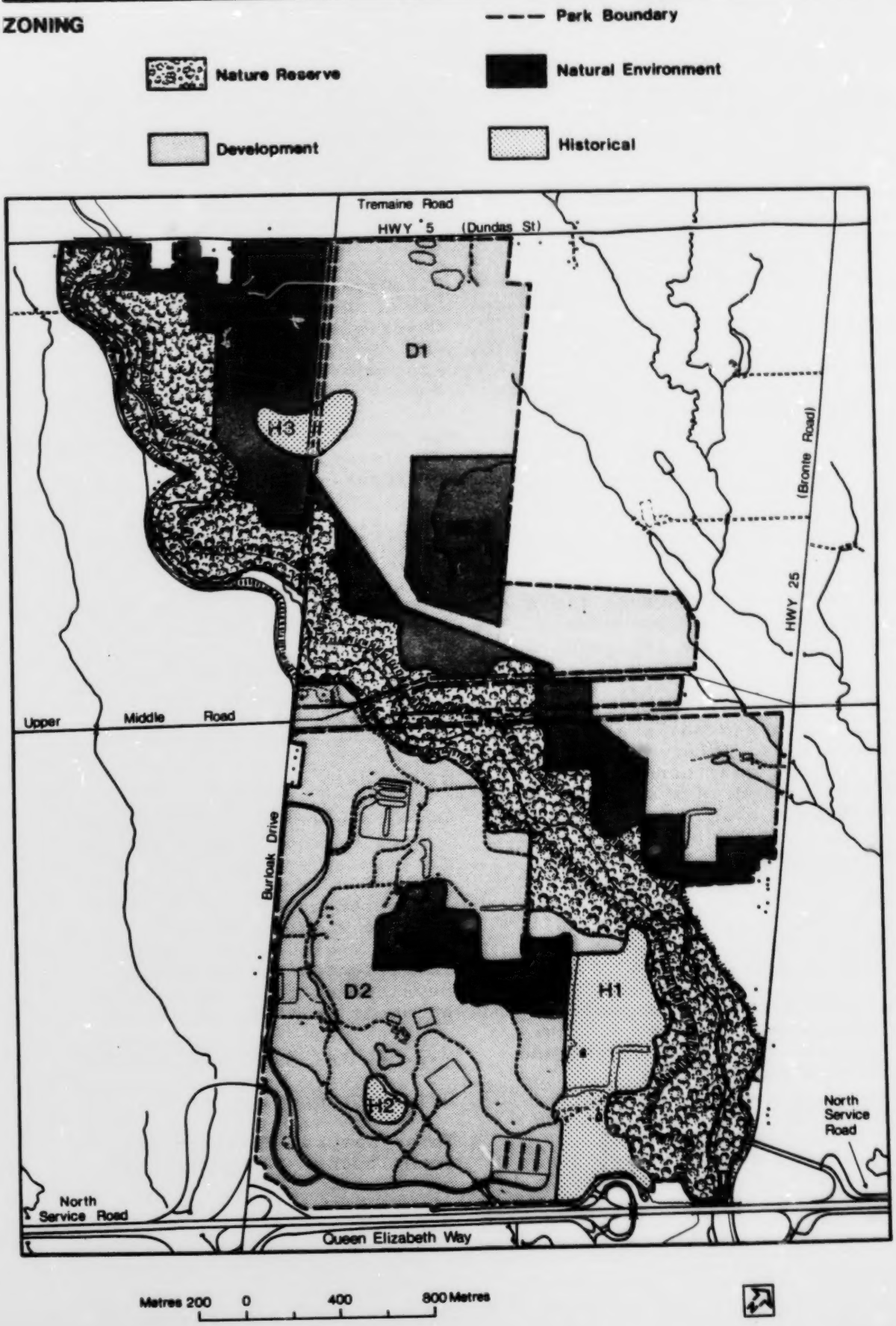
The Nature Reserve Zone supports a variety of vegetation communities including rich Willow and Maple floodplains, steep forested valley slopes and mixed upland hardwoods. Both Carolinian forest and prairie elements are represented.

The zone includes habitat for numerous species of provincial and regional significance, including the Wood Turtle, Ginseng and Muhly Grass.

A regionally significant buried river valley, a series of river cut terraces,

FIGURE 3:

ZONING



excellent exposures of Queenston shale and a post-glacial cave are notable earth science features found along the valley corridor.

Adjacent to the valley is a provincially significant archaeological site that will also be protected in the zone.

Policies:

The Nature Reserve Zone protects significant resources from development. Management will promote natural evolutionary processes on all lands within the zone.

Where select species or communities are deemed important for either interpretive purposes or the perpetuation of unusual flora or fauna, special management techniques may be implemented.

Specifically, the small scale use of fire may be utilized to perpetuate remnant prairie communities. Other special situations and techniques will be identified in a vegetation management plan.

Development within the zone will be limited to signage and walking trails, including an in-valley crossing with trail connections to the north and south of the park.

Permitted activities include recreational fishing, hiking, approved research projects and nature interpretation.

Equestrian trails are presently located on the tablelands within the Nature Reserve Zone. These trails were developed as an interim use and will be allowed to remain unless environmental impacts or user conflicts are identified. There will be no expansion of current equestrian uses within the zone.

7.2 Development Zone

Description:

Approximately 342 hectares of Development Zone occur within the park. This zoning applies to areas where more intensive development exists or is proposed.

Zone D1 (152 hectares) is located north of the Bronte Creek valley. It includes a parking area, an access and service corridor and an area for future park development.

Zone D2 (190 hectares) is located south of the valley and contains much of the existing day-use development.

Policies:

Development Zones provide for a wide variety of recreational facilities and activities.

Some archaeological sites are located within Development Zones. These sites shall be investigated before any development takes place on or adjacent to them.

7.3 Natural Environment Zone

Description:

Three Natural Environment Zones occupy 128 hectares of park land.

Zone NE1 (21 hectares) occurs within the main day-use area of the park. The zone contains an upland woodlot and adjacent areas containing planted trees and natural regeneration.

Zone NE2 (25 hectares) is an upland Oak-Hickory woodlot with associated scrubland, old field and agricultural areas.

Zone NE3 (82 hectares) is also an upland site supporting young planted trees, abandoned orchards and agricultural fields that are in an early state of natural succession.

Zones NE2 and NE3 are both located north of the Bronte Creek valley.

Policies:

Natural Environment Zones protect features of the park landscape while providing for low intensity recreation.

Permitted activities include hiking, walking and organized programs for recreation. Horseback riding is also provided north of the valley.

A bicycle trail passes through the narrowest portion of Zone NE1. This use will continue but there will be no expansion into the zone.

The environmental quality and buffering capacity of Natural Environment Zones will be reinforced by encouraging native vegetation to establish. The planting of native tree species may also be carried out.

7.4 Historical Zones

Description:

Three Historical Zones occupying 40 hectares of land have been designated.

Zone H1 (31 hectares) includes the historical Spruce Lane Farm and its agricultural land base. Zones H2 (2.5 hectares) and H3 (6.5 hectares) are provincially significant archaeological sites that are not protected by other zone designations.

Policies:

The Historical Zones contain provincially significant buildings and archaeological sites. Restorations and landscaping in such zones will conform to high standards of historical authenticity.

Development in Historical Zones will be limited to walking and cycling trails, signage and interpretive and educational facilities that promote cultural heritage appreciation.

Management within Zone H1 will allow for low intensity picnicking.

Agricultural operations may be carried out in all Historical Zones. Work undertaken in Zone H1 will employ equipment and techniques commonly used in the early 20th century. In special instances it may be practical to use more modern machinery.

8.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Bronte Creek Provincial Park will be managed in accordance with Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies.

Additional policies to meet the specific requirements of this park are as follows.

8.1 Landform

The Bronte Creek valley contains very steep slopes that are prone to landslides and erosion. Such disturbances are accelerated by the indiscriminate use of slope faces by park visitors.

Where disturbances are naturally occurring there will be no action taken. Where disturbances are caused by man, the source of the disturbance will be controlled and remedial measures will be implemented.

8.2 Vegetation

A vegetation management plan will be prepared to provide direction for grounds maintenance, natural community management and the perpetuation of special flora and fauna through habitat maintenance.

8.2.1 Vegetation Management Principles

Within the Nature Reserve Zone the primary objective of vegetation management is to perpetuate the park's diverse natural communities.

In Natural Environment Zones emphasis will be directed towards maintaining an evolving natural landscape.

Both zones may require special management techniques for the perpetuation of significant species or communities. This could include the use of fire to enhance remnant prairie sites.

In Development and Historical Zones, vegetation management will be directed towards maintaining environments complementary to day-use recreation and the Rural Living Theme, respectively.

8.2.2 Removal of Material

Removal of vegetation by the public is prohibited.

Collections for approved research projects may be made by staff or with ministry approval, providing that such collections do not threaten a population's viability.

Tree cutting for commercial purposes will not be permitted. Where trees are removed for safety reasons, for development, or for the enhancement of particular habitats, they may be used for park purposes.

8.2.3 Vegetation Monitoring

Surveys will be undertaken to quantify changes in vegetation over time. Such information can be used to assess the impacts of use on vegetation, especially along trails in the Nature Reserve Zone.

8.2.4 Other Vegetation Management Issues

Tree Planting:

Only species indigenous to the area will be planted. Efforts will be concentrated in Development Zones where grass cutting, heavy visitor use and the need for quick shade often make natural regeneration impractical.

Proposed sites for planting include:

- picnic and day-use areas;
- park berms;
- buffer sites where visual screening is desirable;
- select sites where aesthetics need improvement;
- the north quadrant Development Zone; and
- appropriate lands within Natural Environment Zones.

The vegetation management plan for the park will provide guidance respecting species selection, planting techniques and after care.

Hazardous Trees:

Hazardous trees within 25 meters of the edge of public roads and parking areas may be felled and used for park purposes. Hazardous trees that threaten the safety of trail users will be felled but left on site.

Noxious Weeds and Non-native Species:

Poison Ivy may be controlled within the Development Zone or alongside designated trails. Non-native species may be controlled or eliminated as appropriate.

Insects and Disease:

Insects and diseases that threaten park values will be controlled wherever feasible. Where treatment is warranted it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the target. Priority will be given to the use of biological controls.

Fire Management:

Prescribed burns may be used to rejuvenate the park's prairie communities. All other fires will be suppressed.

Demonstration Woodlot Management:

A 3.5 hectare portion of woodlot is currently being managed in conjunction with staff from the Cambridge District forestry program. The site is located within Development Zone D2.

The purpose of the undertaking is to demonstrate good forest management practices and to enable visitors to compare adjacent sites that are natural and managed.

A prescription for managing this small area will be included in the vegetation management plan. The site will not be expanded in size.

Interim Agricultural Uses:

In select areas agriculture is being used as a form of interim land management. This practice will be phased out as soon as reasonably possible.

The vegetation management plan will identify which agricultural areas will be planted in trees and which will be left to natural regenerative processes.

8.3 Fisheries

Angling in the park occurs primarily in the spring and fall months when migratory Rainbow Trout, Coho and Chinook Salmon are prevalent. Angler impacts will be closely monitored to determine the need for access control.

Formal management of the fishery is not proposed within the park but opportunities to enhance fish habitat may occur through volunteer efforts.

8.4 Wildlife

Park managers will endeavour to maintain a diverse, naturally occuring fauna. A comprehensive survey of faunal populations will be undertaken to identify significant species and habitats.

Habitat management will be addressed in the vegetation management plan. The maintenance of existing animal populations and the provision of wildlife viewing opportunities will be the primary objectives of habitat management.

Hunting will not be permitted in the park.

Animals such as Skunks and Groundhogs may require population control through a ministry supervised program.

8.5 Cultural Resources

The cultural resources of Bronte Creek Provincial Park include archaeological sites of provincial and lesser significance and a number of Victorian buildings that date from 1861 to the early 1900's.

The Breckon homestead, known as Spruce Lane, has been restored to depict a working farm of the 1910-1914 era. The Medland House is being used as the current Visitor Centre and the Burkholder house as the park office. Most of the remaining buildings are empty or serve interim uses.

The high cost of maintenance and limited potential for accommodating park functions make it difficult to justify keeping some of these buildings.

A study will be undertaken to determine how the buildings can be incorporated into the long term plans for the park. The study should address how the buildings could be altered to better meet park needs yet retain their character and historical significance.

The park's archaeological and historical resources provide opportunities to explore a variety of cultural themes on a local scale. These themes are noted in appendix A.

A comprehensive analysis of archaeological resources and potential interpretive themes will be undertaken. Those that are appropriate will be incorporated into the park's Interpretive Strategy.

Before major development is allowed to occur within known archaeological sites or within areas previously not surveyed, the Ministry of Natural Resources will consult with the Ministry of Culture and Communications for advice and direction.

Rural living will continue to be interpreted through Spruce Lane Farm, which is protected within Historical Zone H1. Efforts to carry the Rural Living Theme to other day-use areas will also be explored.

The Museum Orchard, also in Zone H1, contains apple varieties common to the early 1900's. This orchard should be maintained and interpreted as part of the Spruce Lane Farm operation.

9.0 OPERATIONS POLICIES

A park Operations Strategy will be prepared to inform staff about the day-to-day operation of the park.

In addition to addressing the policies which follow, the Strategy will include such topics as budget, staffing, maintenance schedules, enforcement and emergency services. The provisions of the Strategy will be consistent with approved Ontario Provincial Parks Operating Standards.

9.1 Visitor Services

The visitor services program at Bronte Creek Provincial Park will emphasize the park's natural and cultural resources including, to a lesser extent, the Rural Living Theme.

A detailed visitor services Interpretive Strategy will be prepared to describe all interpretive programs. The Strategy will ensure that all components identified in 9.1.3 are fully addressed and that programs are presented in a manner consistent with zone policies.

Types of programs, impact on the environment and monitoring for signs of overuse are important considerations in establishing programs for delivery within Nature Reserve and Natural Environment Zones.

The three major functions of visitor services will be implemented according to the following priorities and guidelines.

9.1.1 Information

Visitors to Bronte Creek will be informed of daily programs, park management issues, local points of interest, the provincial parks system, and various management programs of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

This will be achieved through the preparation of park publications, exhibits, audiovisual aids, guest speakers and staff contact.

Visitor services programs that occur on a regular basis (ie guided walks, plays, etc.) will be promoted in the local media on a scheduled basis.

9.1.2 Recreation

The park provides a variety of informal outdoor recreation opportunities.

Organized events will not normally be offered unless arranged in cooperation with host agencies or clubs.

9.1.3 Interpretation

Interpretation will be directed towards all visitors coming to the park. The primary objective of park programs will be to promote an understanding of the significant natural and cultural resources of Bronte Creek.

Specifically this includes 4 components:

- the biological significance and sensitivity of the valley;
- glacial history relating to the valley's formation;
- occupation of the site by native cultures; and
- rural life in the early 1900's as portrayed through Spruce Lane Farm.

Summer program delivery is based largely on staff contact but throughout the winter and shoulder seasons self-use techniques will be more prominent.

Interpretive messages will be delivered through displays, publications, audiovisual productions, self-guiding trail brochures, guest speakers, special event demonstrations, educational plays and guided walks.

Evening programming will be explored on a trial basis. The degree of success will be used to gauge the need for an amphitheatre.

The Visitor Centre and Spruce Lane Farm will be the focal points for interpretive programming. Limited interpretation of the farm animals and their care will occur at the Children's Farm.

A new multi-use building is proposed that will provide a centre for visitor orientation and Visitor Services.

Current levels of programming will be expanded to provide more opportunities for natural and cultural heritage appreciation. The intent is to provide more programs which will address a wider range of interests and age levels.

Emphasis will also be placed on developing structured programs and workshops to assist teachers and day camp leaders in conducting successful outings to the park. Beyond this, additional staff assistance for outdoor education is limited.

9.2 Research

Biological, geological and archaeological research will be encouraged, especially by the academic community. Research in the recreation field is also encouraged to evaluate the suitability of ongoing programs, levels of visitor satisfaction and general user trends.

All research initiatives will require ministry approval. A listing of research proposals is provided in Appendix B.

9.3 Recreation Management

Bronte Creek Provincial Park will be managed to provide a variety of high quality day-use recreational opportunities.

9.3.1 Day-use Recreation

Most day-use facilities will be located south of the river valley (see figures 2 and 4).

Day-use activities include family and group picnicking, sunbathing, swimming, court and field games, children's play and tennis. In the winter months tobogganning and pleasure skating are prominent.

Trail networks have been developed on each side of the Bronte Creek valley. Trails provide opportunities for walking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and fitness programming.

Group picnicking is a popular activity at the park. To accommodate this use, 5 picnic sites are available for reservation on a user-pay basis. The sites are located in the south quadrant and are intended for groups of 100 persons or larger.

Additional picnic sites suitable for smaller groups and family use are available on a first-come, first-serve basis at no extra charge.

Public vehicles and buses are not allowed to access picnic sites using internal park roads. Transportation to and from picnic locations is the responsibility of the visiting group,however, staff escorts are available on a limited basis.

Picnic areas are not supervised and, except where reservation fees are paid, groups are not given exclusive rights to any area.

9.4 Marketing

The park is currently being marketed through local tourist associations. Attempts will be made to maintain and enhance such relationships.

The marketing strategy for the park is to increase visitation during summer weekdays and throughout the winter and shoulder seasons. Moderate levels of visitation during these periods will enable the most efficient use of existing facilities.

Marketing will focus on increased community involvement and will target family and empty nester groups.

Marketing emphasis will be given to:

- local promotion;
- personal selling directed towards associations and business; and
- the formation of a committee to generate sponsorship for programs and development.

9.5 Tourism Services

A summer food outlet is located at the north end of the day-use area. The trailer used for this purpose will be replaced with a permanent facility.

A second all seasons food concession is located at the Recreation Complex. Bicycles, basketballs, cross-country skiis, skates and other rental equipment are also available at this location.

The provision of other services will be considered only where they complement park values and comply with park policy.

10.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

A number of new park facilities are proposed (see figure 4).

Site plans providing specific locations and detailed designs will be approved in advance of all major construction.

10.1 Day-use

Day-use development will be concentrated in the southern quadrant of the park. As day-use demands increase, parking capacity will be expanded from 2025 to approximately 2600 spaces. Additional vault privies (2), picnic shelters (4) and play facilities will also be built. Locations for these proposals are shown on figure 4.

10.2 Existing Facilities

The ministry anticipates the continued operation of existing park facilities but hours and operating seasons may vary.

10.3 Visitor Services

A multiple-use, open concept building is proposed for development in the south quadrant of the park. This facility will become the centre for visitor orientation and Visitor Services.

The building will be located near the Burloak entrance. The site is within convenient walking distance of trails, picnic areas, play facilities and the Children's Farm.

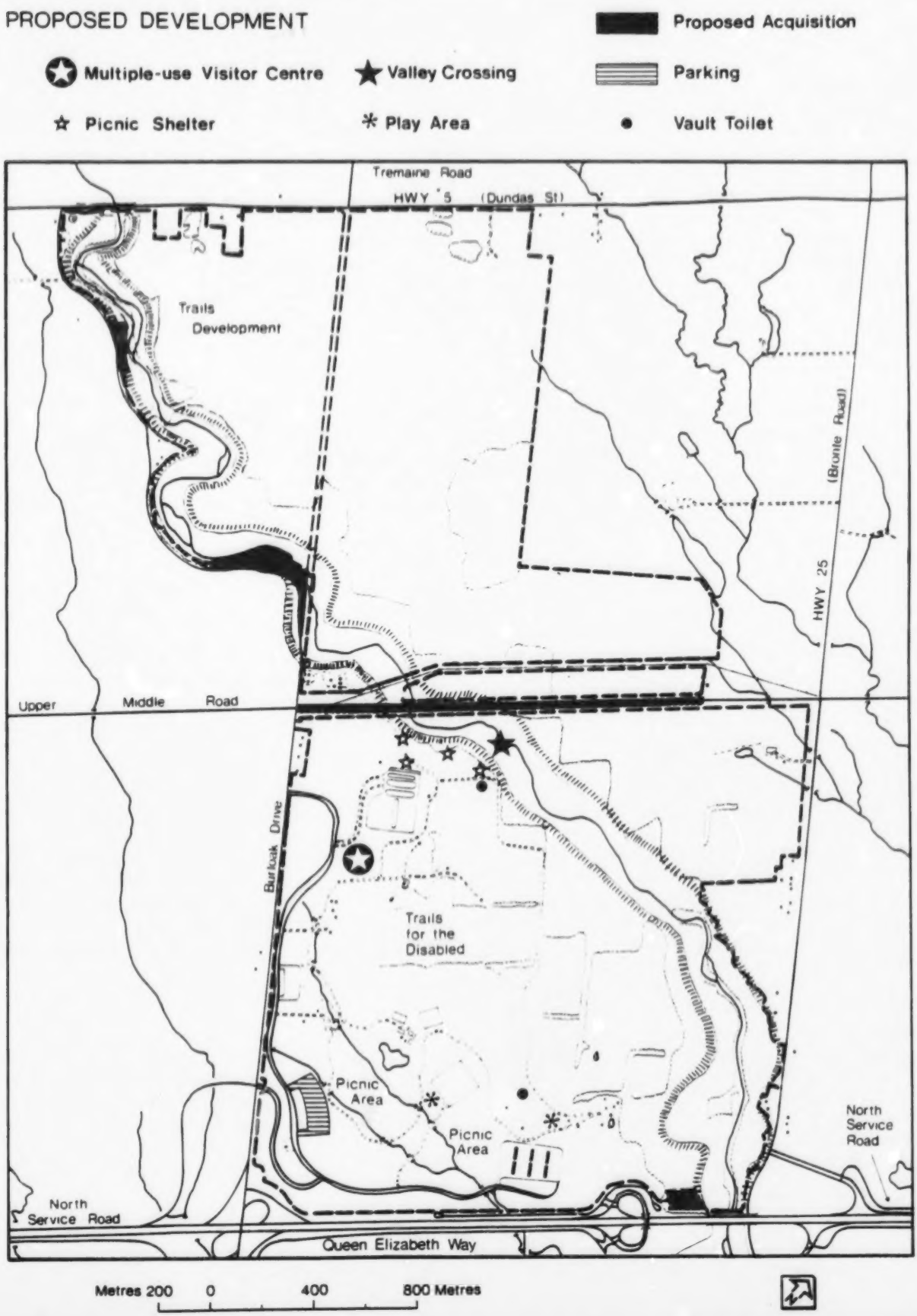
Included in the complex will be office and display space, a storage area, a meeting room, a theatre, workshop facilities and an open multi-use area.

10.4 Trails

The present trails system will be expanded, particularly in the north and east quadrants of the park.

New trail initiatives, in decreasing order of priority, are:

FIGURE 4:


PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
Proposed Acquisition
Multiple-use Visitor Centre
Valley Crossing
Parking
Picnic Shelter
Play Area
Vault Toilet
Tremaine Road
HWY 5 (Dundas St)
Trails Development
(Bronte Road)
HWY 25
Upper Middle Road
Burloak Drive
Trails for the Disabled
Picnic Area
Picnic Area
North Service Road
North Service Road
Queen Elizabeth Way
Metres 200 0 400 800 Metres

- trails for the disabled;
- walking and equestrian trails in the north and east quadrants;
- links with municipal bicycle and pedestrian trails; and
- an in-valley crossing with associated side trails.

Equestrian trails will be permitted north of the valley unless environmental impacts and user conflicts are identified. Although equestrian trails are not permitted in the Nature Reserve Zone, this non-conforming use will continue until trail re-alignments are finalized.

Interim trails may have to be re-located to remain compatible with new development. As trail uses and alignments are finalized, wear surfaces will be applied (eg. wood chips, gravel screenings).

South of the valley there is limited space available for new trails development. In this area priority will be given to developing trail opportunities for the physically handicapped.

An in-valley crossing, with complementary side trails, will be developed to link the north and south halves of the park. The crossing will consist of a centrally located bridge at creek level, with trail access down each valley slope. Protection of the sensitive valley features will be of the highest priority.

Bicycle and pedestrian access to the park is being developed by the municipalities of Oakville and Burlington. Connections to these trails will be provided at the park boundary. The park will support municipal and provincial efforts to attain an appropriate crossing of the Queen Elizabeth Highway and Bronte Creek.

To ensure the optimum use of trails and to protect park resources, a trail management plan will be prepared. The plan will examine future trail needs, locations, interpretive potentials, special design requirements, monitoring and maintenance standards.

All new trail development will be in conformity with park zoning policies and the visitor services interpretive strategy. Care will be taken to minimize adverse affects on the natural and cultural features of the park.

10.5 Buffer Areas

To reduce the potential for land use conflicts, spatial buffers will be created next to private residences and lands designated for major residential or industrial development. Key buffer areas will be planted to provide visual screening.

10.6 Servicing

The south quadrant of the park is fully serviced with electricity, sewer and water. Trunk services are also in place north of the valley.

10.7 Internal Roads

All internal roads will eventually be hard surfaced to reduce dust and maintenance problems.

10.8 Municipal Consultation

The Ministry of Natural Resources will consult with area municipalities regarding the development of major new facilities. This will provide opportunities to comment on design and servicing.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Implementation of the Management Plan will be dependant upon funding for park operations and capital development. As funding permits, the Plan will be implemented in a logical, cost effective manner.

The following priorities will be used as a guide for implementation.

Phase 1:

- new picnic shelters (4) and vault privies (2) in the south quadrant;
- an upgraded seasonal food concession in the south quadrant;
- south quadrant road surfacing;
- a vegetation management plan;
- an heritage houses study;
- play facilities in the south quadrant;
- trail upgrading to provide facilities for the disabled (Mice, Men and Maiden's Blush Trail in the south quadrant);
- a south quadrant parking lot (575 spaces); and
- a south quadrant visitor centre.

Phase 2:

- a trail management plan;
- a visitor services interpretive strategy;
- north and east quadrant trail alignments;
- links with municipal access trails.
- north and east quadrant trail surfacing (gravel or wood chips); and
- a valley crossing with side trails.

12.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to public consultation.

Phase I of the Management Plan Review consisted of the preparation of Terms of Reference. This was widely circulated and a number of meetings were initiated to explain the review process and identify opportunities for input.

During Phase II a detailed report and a summary tabloid were prepared, complete with questionnaires. These provided

Background Information about the park and established Issues and Options with respect to the review. Both the reports and tabloids were widely circulated and their availability was promoted through various news media.

Public open houses were held in Oakville (June 14th, 1988) and Burlington (June 16th, 1988). The open houses were promoted through written correspondance and newspaper ads. An in-park display and numerous presentations were also undertaken to expedite the review process.

A summary of Phase II public consultation is provided in Appendix C.

Copies of this Plan (Phase III) are available from the Bronte Creek Provincial Park office or the Cambridge District office of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Public consultation and review of this plan will be facilitated through additional open houses and written correspondance.

13.0 REFERENCES

Bronte Creek Provincial Park Advisory Committee. 1972. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Policy Recommendations Report. Ontario Department of Lands and Forests.

Campbell, C.A. 1973. A Survey of the Herpetofauna of Bronte Creek Provincial Park.

City of Burlington. 1985. Official Plan Amendment No. 49. Office Consolidation.

G.D. Boggs Associates Limited. 1977. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Master Plan. Initial Five Year Review - 1977. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Central Region, Ontario Ministry Of Natural Resources.

Hanna, R. 1984. Life Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest in Site District 7-4. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Central Region, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

House, L. and D. Carleton. 1988 (in preparation). A Life Science Inventory of Bronte Creek Provincial Park. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Central Region, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Langlands, E. 1972. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Historical Survey. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

_____. 1972. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Historical Report. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Lindsay, K.M. and D. Carleton. 1979. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Life Science Inventory Check Sheet. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Central Region, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Logan, L., P. O'Connor, S. Peck and R. White. 1988. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Tourism, Development and Marketing Plan. Georgian College School of Tourism and Hospitality.

MacDonald, I. and M. Schreiber. 1973. International Biological Program Check Sheet for Bronte Creek Provincial Park. Completed under the auspices and direction of the Committee of Terrestrial Ecosystems, International Biological Program.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1978. Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Queen's Park, Toronto.

_____. 1983. Cambridge District Land Use Guidelines.

_____. 1986. Provincial Park Management Planning Reference. 4th draft. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Queen's Park, Toronto.

_____. 1987. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Management Plan Review - Terms of Reference. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Central Region.

_____. 1987. Cambridge District Fisheries Management Plan - Background Information and Optional Management Strategies - 1987-2000 - A Summary. Parks and Recreation Areas Branch, Central Region.

_____. 1988. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Management Plan Review - Background Information and Issues and Options. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Central Region.

_____.1988. Central Region Provincial Parks Visitor Services Strategy. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Central Region.

Ontario Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs. 1978. The Parkway Belt West Plan.

Project Planning Associates Limited. 1972. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Master Plan. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Regional Municipality of Halton. 1978. Halton Region Environmentally Sensitive Areas Study. Ecological and Environmental Advisory Committee, Planning Department.

Regional Municipality of Halton. 1982. The Regional Plan - Official Plan For The Halton Planning Area. Consolidation.

Roberts, A., S. Thomas and D. Spittal. 1974. Archaeological Work, South Quadrant, Bronte Creek Provincial Park. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Schreiber, M. and I. MacDonald. 1971. A Preliminary Ecological Survey of Bronte Creek Park Reserve, Town of Burlington and Town of Oakville, Halton County. Ontario Department of Lands and Forests.

Thomas, S. 1975. Bronte Creek Archaeological Report, Part I: Recommendations. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

_____. 1977. 1976 Archaeological Research in the Bronte Creek Area: Four Habitation Sites of the Archaic Stage. University of Toronto.

Thomas, S. and L.A. Pavlish. 1975. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Research Requirements And 1975 Field Season Budget Proposal and A Long Range Feasibility Study For The Interpretive Potential of Archaeology. Parks and Recreation Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Thomas, S. and L.A. Pavlish, with appendices by M. Lockyer and J. Chisholm. 1975. 1975 Bronte Creek Provincial Park Archaeological Report. Part II: Research Report. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Thomas, S. and R. Zurba, with appendix by E. Salter. 1973. Bronte Creek Archaeological Report for 1973. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Thomas, S., J. Chisolm, T. Hutchinson, L.A. Pavlish and A. Roberts. 1975. 1972-1974 Bronte Creek Provincial Park Archaeological Resource Inventory. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Town of Oakville. 1985. Official Plan.

Warren, W.D. 1972. Geology and Geomorphology of Bronte Creek Provincial Park. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Woerns, N. 1977. Bronte Creek Provincial Park Earth Science Inventory Check Sheet. Parks and Recreational Areas Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

APPENDIX A

POTENTIAL THEMES FOR CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

- Early Post Glacial Hunters 9000-5000 B.C.
- Laurentian Hunters and Southern Woodland Hunters, Fishers, and Harvesters 4000 B.C.-500A.D.
- Pickering and Glenmeyer Horticulturalists A.D. 500-1250
- Ancestral Neutral/Huron Confederacies A.D. 1300-1550
- Northern and Southern Iroquoian Fur Traders A.D. 1550-1695
- Algonkian Hunters, Traders and Farmers A.D. 1695-1900
- The Fur Trade
- Alienation of the Land
- Local Settlement
- Local Forest Industries
- Rural Life: Local Agriculture and the Fishery
- Local Manufacturing
- Development of Regional Transportation Networks
- Recreation and Conservation
- Urban Development

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PROPOSALS

- small mammal studies
- a study to determine the level of breeding of rare birds of the park
- additional vegetation surveys
- quantitative vegetation surveys to assess trail use impacts
- verification of unconfirmed significant plants
- documentation of additional locations for provincially and regionally significant flora and fauna
- a study to assess the feasibility of using bioengineering techniques to stabilize valley slopes
- ongoing surveys of visitor perceptions and expectations
- a comprehensive investigation and analysis of known archaeological sites
- exploration of unsurveyed areas of the park for additional archaeological resources

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF PHASE II PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation from Phase II of the Management Plan Review has played an important role in determining the content of the Draft Revised Management Plan.

A total of 103 questionnaires were received as well as written correspondance from municipalities, agencies and interest groups. This input is summarized below.

There is strong support to recognize Natural Areas Protection as the prominent park role. The public also supports park endeavours in the areas of Recreation and Education. As a result these roles are of primary and secondary importance, respectively. Resources Management is also a secondary role but of lesser significance.

The public have further indicated that strong support exists to recognize Natural and Cultural Heritage Appreciation as the primary theme for guiding programming and development. The Rural Living Theme is well supported as a theme of secondary importance. The Gateway Theme received relatively little support and is not formally recognized.

Respondents expressed a desire for new facility development blended with new programming initiatives.

Program proposals that were strongly supported are:

- enhanced nature programming;
- outdoor recreation skills instruction;
- structured programs for schools, teachers and day camps;
- special event demonstrations complementary to the Rural Living Theme; and
- extended facility hours and seasons.

Those strongly supporting new development (approximately 75% of the questionnaire returns), favour the following:

- a family campground in the north quadrant;
- trails for the disabled in the south quadrant;
- a group campground in the east quadrant;
- an internal transportation system in the south quadrant;
- facility development in the north quadrant; and
- a valley crossing.

There is also a good level of support in the south quadrant for a number of additional facilities. These include:

- additional picnic shelters, washrooms and parking;
- a welcome centre;
- an amphitheatre; and
- a visitor interpretive centre.

The above options have been incorporated into the Draft Revised Management Plan with the following exceptions:

- family and group camping;
- outdoor recreation skills instruction;
- a south quadrant transportation system;
- facility development in the north quadrant; and
- construction of a welcome centre and amphitheatre.

The decision not to provide camping within the time frame of this Plan reflects the mixed response received from the general public, the high priority for upgrading aging facilities across the provincial parks system and the significant costs associated with campground development and operation.

The camping issue will be re-examined at the next Management Plan Review. In the interim the ministry will ensure that no development occurs to preclude the establishment of a campground.

With the decision on camping deferred, the development of major facilities in the north quadrant becomes unfeasible. The existing facilities and abundant space occurring in the south quadrant make that area the logical site for day-use expansion.

Outdoor recreation skills instruction and a south quadrant transportation system were considered to be too costly for the benefits derived. These were subsequently dropped from the Plan.

It was decided by the planning team that the function of a welcome centre could be incorporated into a multi-use visitor interpretive centre. On this recommendation the welcome centre was dropped as a separate facility.

The future construction of an amphitheatre is to be determined by the success of trial evening programs.